

Bālabodha



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Granth Introduction:

In a village called Ambālā, once there was a person named Nārāyaṇadāsa Kāyastha . He came to take refuge in Shri Mahaprabhuji. He Stayed with Shri Mahaprabhuji for a few days. After some days, Mahaprabhuji ordered him to go back to his house and asked him to perform Seva/divine service of Shri Krishna, within his house. Listening to Shri Mahaprabhuji's orders, he replied stating that "Maharaj, I have stayed with you for so many days but there is no enlightenment in my conscience." Therefore, Shri Vallabh created this text in the form of "Bal Bodh" for him. Those who are curious about Dharma Shastras, for them; in a very brief way; all of its principles are summarized here. Vedic scriptures have divided all the human activities and the purposes behind activities in four categories, which are known as Purusharth (puruṣārtha). The four Puruṣārthas are – Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Moksha. These Puruṣārthas are of two types:- (1) As stated by Bhagavān himself in Vedas and; (2) Later stated by sages as per the orders given by Bhagavān.

Out of these Puruṣārthas; Righteousness (Dharma), wealth (Artha), and desire for ultimate happiness (Kāma) are described in Manusmriti, Grihya Sutra, Brihaspati Niti, Vatsayayan kamasutra and some other scriptures by Sages; whereas Puruṣārthas as explained in Ved haven't been described in these Granthas. So ultimately descriptive analysis of the forth Purusharth; i.e.Moksha (The salvation/sublimation of soul), its types, several methods for attaining salvation has been given in this specific Grantha.

As the title suggests, it is intended as an exhortation to juniors in spiritual life. Purpose behind the creation of this text is to clarify the difference between considering these Puruṣārthas as our life's ultimate goal and considering devotion as the most superior purpose of human life. Shri Mahaprabhuji wants to clarify that, those who would have a tendency of attaining these four Puruṣārthas, can follow their respective path and attain the desired fruit. But those blessed beings who would like to choose selfless devotion towards Krishna as their goal, must not indulge in these activities and rather concentrate upon Krishna.

Granth:

***Natvā hariṃ sadānandaṃ sarva-siddhānta-saṅgraham |
bāla-prabodhanārthāya vadāmi suviniścitam || 1 ||***

Translation: Bowing down to Shri Krishna, the infinite entity, who always removes the sorrows and sins of his devotees. Addressing new devotees, who are curious to attain the knowledge regarding Dharmashastras (and methods for attaining Puruṣārthas as prescribed), Mahaprabhuji is preaching all the principles as prescribed in vedic scriptures for their enlightenment.

Explanation: First part of the verse includes Mangalacharan(invocation) through which Shri Vallabhacharyji remembers Bhagavān Shri Krishna. Later part of the verse denotes the subject matter of this text. Here, Shri Vallabhacharyji summarises all the principles as explained in the Vedic Scriptures assuming that a person who

would be approaching Pushti Sampraday is first of all, a Vedic-Hindu and therefore may have some sort of prejudice regarding the means of attaining Puruṣārthas and fruits accordingly. And hence, before starting the journey on a devotional path, Shri Mahaprabhuji wants the Pushti being to be clear regarding all these means and the ultimate purpose of Pushti devotion as well. So this text purposefully provides exceptionally beautiful description regarding the motive of human life as explained in the scriptures; and additionally clears the picture, for the sake of devotional life that a Pushti being will choose going forward.

***Dharmārtha-kāma-mokṣākhyāś catvāro'rthā manīṣiṇām |
jīveśvara-vicāreṇa dvidhā te hi vicāritāḥ || 2 ||***

Translation: The four Puruṣārthas for a learned men are:- (1) righteousness/dutifulness (Dharm), (2) wealth (Arth), (3) The desire for attaining ultimate happiness (Kama), and (4) the salvation of soul(Moksha). These Puruṣārthas (efforts) are described by Bhagavān as well as jīvas (Revered sages).

Explanation: All the activities we perform throughout the day or throughout our lifespan can be divided in these four categories.

1. Though the term “Dharm” means duty and can denote all our duties in accordance to our nation, society, family, friends etc; but when the term Dharm is coined as Purusharth, it particularly means that whichever duties are explained in the scriptures are known as Dharm and therefore can't be thought of as a generalised term.
2. Similarly, “Arth” means the methods for accumulating money or possessions. Being indulged in any sort of money raising method at will, doesn't fulfill the Arth Purusharth, but only by following the means of attaining money as thought out and explained in the scriptures can fulfill the Arth Purusharth; and only then those possessions can fulfill the Dharm Puruṣārtha.
3. To fulfill the worldly desires and to make our sensory organs satisfied, is a normal human tendency. But for fulfilling those desires, if a person chooses a wrong path which is prohibited in scriptures, then that action won't fulfill the “Kaam” Purusharth. Therefore, fulfilling the desires through the methods explained in scriptures is known as Kaam Purusharth.
4. “Moksh” can be attained only through the means as described in the scriptures. So ideally a Vedic follower has to fulfill all his/her actions by following the scriptural ordinances and must live accordingly, only then his Puruṣārthas can be fulfilled.

All these 4 Puruṣārthas are interrelated to each other and therefore by missing any one of these, a Hindu would end up disturbing all the Puruṣārthas ultimately.

***Alaukikāstu vedoktāḥ sādhyā-sādhana-saṃyutāḥ |
laukikā ṛṣibhiḥ proktās tathāiveśvaraśikṣayā || 3 ||***

Translation: In Vedas, Bhagavān has described the means of attaining all the above Puruṣārthas along with the means and the results to be achieved. Learned sages have also described the Puruṣārthas in Smriti granth, as per the instruction of Bhagavān.

Explanation: All the four Puruṣārthas and means to attain them have been explained in 2 manner. First of all by Bhagavān himself in the Vedas, and secondly by learned and graced sages. Gradually with time, when human beings didn't remain capable enough to follow the means as explained in the Ved, Bhagavān himself inspired the sages like Manu, Kaśyapa, Parāśara etc to rewrite the means of attaining Puruṣārthas in a simplified manner. Therefore, being graced by the knowledge as provided by Bhagavān himself, sages wrote "Smṛiti" grāṇth and denoted the simplified form of Puruṣārthas for modern beings.

***Laukikāṃstu pravakṣyāmi vedād ādyā yataḥ sthitāḥ |
dharmaśāstrāṇi nītiśca kāmāśāstrāṇi ca kramāt || 4 ||
trivarga-sādhakānīti na tannirṇaya ucyate ||***

Translation: So the Alaukik Puruṣārthas are based in Vedas. Therefore, here Shri Vallabhacharyji doesn't find it necessary to describe those as they have already been explained in Vedas. So, here he describes the Puruṣārthas as explained in the Smṛitis by sages. Among those 4 Puruṣārthas, Dharm, Arth and Kaam are also clarified nicely elsewhere and therefore Mahāprabhuji puts his efforts into explaining the Laukik Moksh Purusharth.

Explanation: Salvation has been considered as the superior most fruit of a religious life by most of the people. In Vedic religion multiple methods for attaining salvation have been described and therefore matter remains confusing for many people regarding the proper means and the ultimate result or type of the salvation a being will achieve at the end. Along with fulfilling this purpose, Mahāprabhuji wants the being to be clear regarding the fruit he would attain after salvation and the fruit he would attain by following the devotional path, so that a follower can't confuse himself between these 2 paths and methods.

***Mokṣe catvāri śāstrāṇi laukike parataḥ svataḥ || 5 ||
dvidhā dve-dve svatas tatra sāmṁkhyā-yogau prakīrtitau |
tyāgātyāga-vibhāgena sāmṁkhye tyāgaḥ prakīrtitaḥ || 6 ||***

Translation: There are four major methods for attaining salvation as taught by sages in Smṛitis. Those four methods have been classified into 2 categories - 1. Salvation by taking refuge 2. Salvation by one's own self. Self-salvation can be achieved by either of the two methods— (1) Sāmṁkhyā and (2) Yoga. In Sāmṁkhyā method, a being has to leave all the worldly objects and relations behind and must obtain "Sanyāsa."

Explanation: The individual being, when becomes free from the bondages of 2 bodies; (1) The subtle body and (2) The gross body and ends up with the cycle of birth and death; the being is known to have attained salvation. This is the most basic definition of salvation. A being can attain salvation through many methods. Among those means; Shri Mahāprabhuji mentions 4 methods as explained in the Smṛiti treatise. Major categories are – (1) Swataḥ Moksh – the process through which a being can attain salvation on his own, without taking help from any deity. (2) Parataḥ Moksh – the process in which a being takes refuge in deity and attains salvation as a fruit from the deity. Two sub-methods under Swataḥ Moksh are - Sāmṁkhyā and Yoga. If a person opts for Sāmṁkhyā path, he has to abandon his house and attain Sanyāsa. If a being chooses Yoga path, he can stay in his own house and follow the means for attaining salvation.

***Ahantā-mamatā-nāśe sarvathā nirahaṅkṛtau |
svarūpastho yadā jīvaḥ kṛtārthaḥ sa nigadyate || 7 ||***

Translation: By following the Sāṃkhya Marg, when soul becomes free from I-ness and My-ness, the soul remains unattached and after self-realisation, it becomes purified and attains salvation.

Explanation: A soul becomes bound to Avidya as soon as it loses the divine attribute of Anand. Under the effect of Anand attribute, the being attains gross body and subtle body and starts developing I-ness and My-ness towards the body and worldly objects; resulting in forgetting it's real form. Sāṃkhya term has developed from sanskrit term "Saṃkhyā" which literally means 'to count'. By attaining the knowledge regarding constituent elements of the universe, a being realises that the objective world is perishable and therefore a one has to concentrate upon realising it's real form rather than being attentive towards the worldly objects and worldly or outer-worldly desires. As a result of this understanding, a person starts developing the emotion of being detached from the worldly objects, relations and realises that even his I-ness regarding his body is merely a perishable emotion. Therefore, a person having attained this knowledge would choose the path of "Sanyāsa" and would concentrate upon his soul and eventually attain salvation, being free from all the wordly bondages. Ultimately when an individual becomes free from the bondages of both the bodies, the effect of Avidya perishes, resulting in the being attaining its original form – "Chidansh" of Brahm – Conscious particle of Brahm. This condition is known as salvation which can be attained through the path of Sāṃkhya.

***Tadārthaṃ prakriyā kācit purāṇe'pi nirūpitā |
ṛṣibhir bahudhā proktā phalam ekam abāhyataḥ || 8 ||***

Translation: Sages have stated this type of salvation in many different ways in Puranas as well. The same fruit is obtained by following all the Sāṃkhya Shastras, which considers Bhagavān's wholeness.

Explanation: As stated above, the process of counting and understanding the elements is known as Sāṃkhya. Many sages have counted the elements, and there are some minor differences among the opinions placed by different sages. For example some sages have listed 28 elements, some have listed 24, while opinions are available considering 11, 4 or 18 elements as well. Having a look towards all these opinions, a question may arise in our mind if which of these methods or understanding must be considered as proven and authentic. Shri Mahaprabhu answers this question by saying that whichever counting methodology considers The almighty Brahm/Bhagavān as the superior most element, bears the same result as stated in the previous verse. But any such understanding in which Bhagavān isn't accepted as the superior most element, won't result in salvation.

***Atyāge yogamārgo hi tyāgo'pi manasaiva hi |
yamādayastu kartavyāḥ siddhe yoge kṛtārthatā || 9 ||***

Translation: Without sacrifice, there is definite Yoga marg to achieve self salvation. There also, a being has to sacrifice everything mentally and must be detached. From "Yama" till "Samadhi", there are 8 steps for achieving the highest level in Yoga marg, which ultimately results in salvation at the end.

Explanation: The method of Sāṃkhya has the process of "Sanyāsa" mandatory, and as per vedic scriptures

only a Brahmin male is eligible of observing Sanyāsa. Therefore, for individual beings belonging to other “Varn”, the option of Yoga is available through which he/she can observe the path towards salvation. A person observing the path of Yoga, is not supposed to attain Sanyāsa, but has to be mentally detached from all the worldly objects, being at his own place along with observing the 8 limbs of Yoga Marg. The 8 limbs of Yoga Marg, are as stated below:

- (1)Yam – Restraints, moral disciplines or moral vows
- (2)Niyam – Positive duties or observances (practices)
- (3)Aasan – Disciplines postures for developing concentration
- (4) Pranayam – Controlled breathing techniques for developing concentration upon internal organs
- (5)Pratyahara – Withdrawal of sensory organs from worldly objects
- (6)Dharna – Focused concentration upon any particular object or body organ like the tip of nose
- (7)Dhyan – Meditative absorption in which a being would forget everything else other than the soul
- (8)Samadhi – Ultimate bliss or enlightenment

***Parāśrayeṇa mokṣastu dvidhā so'pi nirūpyate |
brahmā brāhmaṇatām yātas tadrūpeṇa susevyate || 10 |
te sarvārthā na cādyena śāstraṃ kiñcid udīritam |
ataḥ śivaśca viṣṇuśca jagato hitakāraṇau || 11 ||
vastunaḥ sthiti-saṃhārau kāryau śāstra-pravartakau |***

Translation: Salvation obtained by taking refuge in deities (Vishnu and Shiv) is of two types which has been described here. As Brahmaji is considered a Guru, he is also worshipped as a Brahmin/Guru, as he is the preacher of Vedas. Therefore all the above mentioned four Puruṣārthas are not provided by Brahmaji as fruit. Thus, Shiv and Vishnu are beneficial to the beings interested in attaining these fruits. Vishnu’s function is to sustain the universe and Shiv’s function is to destroy the universe. Both the deities are prominent and proficient in fulfilling their tasks, as assigned by Bhagavān.

Explanation: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiv are the embodiment of 3 powers of Bhagavān for creating, sustaining and destroying the universe. All these 3 deities possess the power of providing salvation to their worshippers. But among these three, Brahmaji is respected as a Guru, since Vedas were obtained by Brahmaji from Bhagavān and later on he himself propagated Vedas to the sages. Therefore one can attempt to understand the concept of salvation from the scriptures obtained from Brahmaji, and can attain salvation, but cannot worship Brahmaji and directly attain salvation as fruit from him. Moreover, Brahmaji is the generator of life, so he doesn’t provide salvation to the soul, because it is the reverse process of generation. Therefore, a being can attain salvation and other wordly and outer-worldly fruits by worshipping Shiv and Vishnu, as per the worshipping process explained in their respective “Agam Tantra” treatise.

***Brahmaiva tādṛśaṃ yasmāt sarvātmakatayodītau || 12 ||
nirdoṣa-pūrṇa-guṇatā tat-tacchāstre tayoḥ kṛtā |
bhoga-mokṣa-phale dātum śaktau dvāvapi yadyapi || 13 ||
bhogaḥ śivena mokṣastu viṣṇuneti viniścayaḥ ||***

Translation: Supreme Brahm himself has embodied in the form of Shiva and Vishnu. So in those scriptures, their Omnipotent form is defined. Their (Shiv's and Vishnu's) infinite, purest and complete qualities are described in "Paśupātaśāstra" for Shiva; and for Vishnu it is described in "Nāradapañcarātra". However Shiva and Vishnu both are capable enough for providing all the fruits; i.e. worldly-objective comforts and also salvation of soul; but particularly Shiva definitely always provides worldly-physical amenities, and Vishnu always provides the salvation.

Explanation: Bhagavān has created the individual being out of his consciousness and the universe is created out of "Prakriti" – the insentient power of Brahm. Being in the universe, an individual obtains a body, sensory organs, internal organs etc which are composed of Prakriti having 3 Gun – Satvik, Rajas and Tamas. Generally people having Satvik tendency, develop a desire for attaining salvation; while other two would have desire to attain worldly and outer worldly results. Brahma is the regulator of Rajas Gun as he conducts the act of creating the universe, Vishnu is the regulator of Satvik Gun as he is the sustainer, while Shiv is the destroyer therefore is the regulator of Tamas Gun. Same tendency is generally found in the worshippers of these 2 deities, as devotees of Shiv are majorly Tamas, while Vishnu's devotees are found to be Satvik. Therefore it becomes easy for Vishnu to provide the fruit of salvation to his Satvik devotees and as worshippers possessing Rajas and Tamas Gun, mostly develop the desire to attain worldly and outer-worldly fruits. Therefore, generally Shiv doesn't provide salvation to his devotees because they possess Rajas and Tamas Gun.

Loke'pi yat prabhurbhukte tanna yacchati karhicit || 14 ||

Translation: In the real world also the owner only enjoys the objects himself, he never allows anyone else to possess or relish his favourite objects. Shiv, always remaining ascetic, relishes the salvation for himself and hence he will not give the fruit of salvation to his devotees and thus, he easily gives all physical comforts to them because Shivji never enjoys worldly comforts. In the same manner, Vishnuji along with Lakshmi (without attachment) is the owner of all the luxuries; therefore, he provides salvation to his devotees rather than giving them worldly comforts.

Explanation: Here Shri Mahaprabhu has explained the above reason with a worldly example.

***Atipriyāya tadapi dīyate kvacideva hī |
niyatārtha-pradānena tadīyatvaṃ tadāśrayaḥ || 15 ||
pratyekaṃ sādhanam caitad dvitīyārthe mahān śramaḥ |***

Translation: Even though, sometimes for very favourite devotees, Shivji will provide the fruit of salvation and Vishnuji will give worldly comforts. Otherwise as per the general rules, Shivji will give worldly comforts and Vishnuji will provide salvation. For attaining any of the above fruits from both the deities, a being must take complete refuge in him and must be devoted towards the same deity. Only after being satisfied with the devotion of the devotee, the deity provides his devotee with the fruits. For providing the opposite kind of fruit, in spite of being capable; both the deities have to exert extra efforts.

Explanation: For example, when Dhruv being 5 years old, performed excessive penance for attaining fruit from Bhagavān Vishnu, he provided him the kingdom and fulfilled his worldly desire. Same way even Shiv provides

salvation to many of his favorite devotees who would be completely devoted towards him. Though, both the deities are capable enough for providing all the fruits, as devotees of both the respective deities possess different attitudes, it gets difficult for the deities to change their(devotees') tendency and provide them fruit accordingly.

Jīvāḥ svabhāvato duṣṭā doṣābhāvāya sarvadā || 16 ||
śravaṇādi tataḥ premṇā sarvaṃ kāryaṃ hi siddhyati |
mokṣastu sulabho viṣṇor bhogaśca śivatas tathā |

Translation: “Jeev” (the soul) is imprecise by nature. To be free from the boundages of this “Avidya”, he should perform Ninefold devotion(Navadhā-bhakti). By performing this ninefold devotion (Navadhā-bhakti), Jeev (Soul) can accomplish all his deeds from this world and other worlds as well. Salvation of soul from Vishnuji and worldly happiness from Shivji can be obtained easily, only if the worshipper accomplishes all these ninefold devotions towards them.

Explanation: From this verse, Mahaprabhuji is taking up the course of this text towards devotion. Though under the topic of salvation, but Acharyacharan wants to explain that - a being cannot attain any superior fruit, without being graced by the almighty lord and that's where the seed of devotion lies. The nine fold devotions are:-

- (1) “*Śravaṇa*” – listening to the name, form and divine acts of Bhagavān.
- (2) “*Kīrtana*” – Singing or speaking the name, form and divine acts of Bhagavān.
- (3) “*Smaraṇa*” – Reminiscing whatever has been read, heard or spoken out.
- (4) “*Pādasevana*” – Divine service.
- (5) “*Arcana*” – To worship the deity as per scriptural ordinance.
- (6) “*Vaṃdana*” – To bow down in front of the lord with humble attitude.
- (7) “*Dāśya*” – To consider ourselves, as a mere servant of lord.
- (8) “*Sakhya*” – Friendly gesture towards Bhagavān developed out of spontaneous love.
- (9) “*Ātmanivedana*” – Complete surrenderance of one's self along with all belongings.

When a being surrenders in the lotus feet of his lord, Bhagavān graces that being with his immense devotion and that's the fulfillment of a devotee. 5 types of salvation can be attained as a result of this method:-

- (1) “*Sāyujya*” – The being assimilates in the infinite form of his lord.
- (2) “*Sārūpya*” – A being can attain a similar form as his lord.
- (3) “*Sāmīpya*” – A being would attain a divine body in the divine abode of his lord, and gets a chance to serve his lord there.
- (4) “*Sārṣṭi*” – A being would attain as similar power as his lord and would use that in serving his lord.
- (5) “*Sālokya*” – A being can attain a place in the divine abode of his lord.

Samarpaṇena ānātmano hi tadīyatvaṃ bhaved dhruvam || 17 ||
atadīyatayā cāpi kevalaś cet samāśritaḥ |

Translation: The only method for attaining the divine grace of lord is to surrender oneself completely along with all his belongings which is known as “Samarpan”. If the being is not able to surrender himself completely, in that case he must take refuge in his master.

Explanation: Mahaprabhuji coins terms for initiating the concept of devotion here: (1) Tadīyatā/Samarpan = Devotional surrenderance (2) Tadāśraya/śaraṇāgati = Taking refugee in lord. Both these concepts have been included here to explain the worshipping part, since, even the deities would provide worldly and outer-worldly results only if the being would have these two emotions in his heart. But immense devotion towards Bhagavān without expecting anything as a result, makes the being capable of attaining Bhagavān Shri Krishna himself.

Tadāśraya-tadīyatvabuddhyai kiñcit samācaret || 18 ||
svadharmam anutiṣṭhan vai bhāra-dvaiguṇyam anyathā |

Translation: As to attain refuge in Bhagavān and his divineness, we should perform total surrenderness and our duties as preached in vedic treatise which are “Varnashramdharm” along with ninefold devotion towards him. While being in the early stage, if a person stops following scriptural ordinances, he would have to bear double sin(burden).

Explanation: Along with being a devotee, as an individual being has attained gross body and subtle body, and possess the emotion of considering the body to be his real form, he develops My-ness for worldly objects and therefore it is necessary for that being to fulfill his duties towards his family, friends, belongings, body, society, nation etc. Therefore scriptures enlists some basic duties which are supposed to be followed by a being until he gets detached from all these identities and identifies himself as an individual soul and a particle of Brahm. If a being tries to set himself free of these duties, he would bear double sin. Therefore until the moment; a being doesn't identify himself as a servant of lord and loses his worldly emotions consisting of his I-ness and My-ness, along with nine fold devotions; he has to follow the scriptural ordinances and his worldly duties.

Ityevaṃ kathitaṃ sarvaṃ naitajjñāne bhramaḥ punaḥ || 19 ||

Translation: This is how all the principles from scriptures have been described in nutshell. After understanding all of these there won't remain any doubt.

Explanation: Mahaprabhuji has clearly talked about all the 4 Puruṣārthas as explained in Vedic scriptures. The purpose behind this explanation, is to make sure that a Pushti being must not have a goal for attaining Dharm, Arth, Kaam and Moksh. If a being develops such a selfless desire to perform devotion to Bhagavān, only then a being can be considered eligible to be initiated into the devotional path of Pushti.

Chart Illustration:

